

SAN MANUEL BAND OF MISSION INDIANS DONATES \$1 MILLION TO AID WILDFIRE VICTIMS

California Tribe Supports Disaster Relief Efforts for Devastating Southern California Wildfires

SAN MANUEL INDIAN NATION, Calif. October 31, 2003 – The San Manuel Band of Mission Indians today announced it will donate \$1 million in disaster relief to various organizations and victims of the fires in San Bernardino. This donation has been earmarked for providing substantial aid to those who have faced massive destruction and loss of homes caused by the still-raging wildfires in Southern California; fires that have damaged more than 100,000 acres and more than 600 structures in San Bernardino County alone. Understanding the pressing demands faced by philanthropic organizations to provide relief for victims of the fires, which includes some of the tribe's employees, the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians immediately recognized the importance of helping the community immediately.

“While we are overwhelmed by the devastation that our reservation and the community has suffered, our first concern was and continues to be taking care of our employees who have lost their homes,” said Deron Marquez, Chairman of San Manuel Band of Mission Indians. “Our tribe felt compelled to quickly mobilize to provide our employees and the people of San Bernardino with immediate needs like water, blankets, pillows and food, and also this financial contribution to help the city and other California tribes that suffered great loss and continue to be impacted.”

Of the \$1 million, the tribe will give \$500,000 to a soon-to-be-developed disaster relief fund set up by Mayor Valles for the impacted people of the city of San Bernardino, Calif.; \$200,000 to help employees of the tribe who have lost their homes; \$100,000 to the local American Red Cross chapter; \$100,000 to the Disaster Relief Fund for Tribes established by California Nations Indian Gaming Association (CNIGA) to aid fellow tribes who suffered loss and damage on their reservations; and the remainder will be made available for other employees and organizations as needed in the coming weeks.

To date, San Manuel Band of Mission Indians has donated cases of its Big Bear Mountain Premium Spring Water to firefighters from the commencement of the Grand Prix fire and also 20,000 bottles of water to victims of the fire. Additionally, Monday the tribe purchased more than \$14,000 worth of blankets, pillows and towels and on Thursday, canned goods, all which were delivered to the local Red Cross shelter. The tribe also initiated a Donations Drive, which has been established at the northeast corner of Victoria and Highland Avenues in Highland, for employees, tribal members and members of the community to bring food, household items and other donations to aid victims of the fires. Ten barrels of Halloween candy was also provided for the children at the local Red Cross shelter.

As a result of the still uncontained blaze, the San Bernardino area, as well as much of Southern California, is without basic needs of electricity, clean water and housing. Funds are greatly needed for disaster relief, and the money donated by San Manuel Band of Mission Indians will be used to provide aid to those who have lost loved ones or homes to the fires, as well as provide temporary relief for people who have evacuated their homes and are dependent upon aid organizations for food and shelter.

About the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians

Descendents of the Serrano Indians, the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians inhabited a territory spanning the San Bernardino Mountains, valley and adjoining desert lands for centuries. Today, the tribe is located on the San Manuel Reservation near Highland, Calif. Like other tribal lands in the United States, the San Manuel Reservation is a sovereign nation with its own system of government and tribal laws. The tribe operates the San Manuel Indian Bingo and Casino and the San Manuel Bottled Water Group, in addition to managing a variety of economic ventures. A partner in the community, the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians actively contributes to a variety of projects in neighboring areas. Nearby cities and towns receive support from the tribe in the way of monetary and bottled water donations for

cultural, social, and economic projects to benefit the common good of the communities in which the tribe's members live and work.

#